GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:141
ANSWERED ON:22.08.2007
WORLD BANK REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Bank in its latest report has pointed out the possibility of economic disturbance, increase in social and environmental problems and large scale migrations due to climate changes occurring in South Asia;

(b) if so, the details of the report;

(c) whether the Government has conducted any study and assessed the impact of climate change on the country;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) the measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to contain impacts of climate change?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH)

(a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 141 BY SHRI J.M.AARON RASHID AND Dr. ARUN KUMAR SARMA FOR 22.8.2007.

(a) & (b) In one recent World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, a comparative analysis has been done of the impact of possible sea level rise due to climate change on developing countries. The Paper does not make any policy recommendations or economic judgements and is a scenario based modeling exercise. The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in the Policy Research Working Paper Series are, however, entirely those of the authors and do not represent the view of the World Bank.

The Research Working Paper above has made projections of vulnerability, migration and possible impacts on GDP across the developing countries, including India. The relative impacts of sea level rise on India are not as great as in other coastal countries or regions of the world because of India's large hinterland and economic geography. In India about 0.25 − 2.5% of the population could be affected and about 0.3 -2.5% of GDP could be affected, depending on the extent of sea level rise in the range of 1-5 meters and other assumptions of the scenarios. This effect is much less than elsewhere in South Asia.

(c) & (d) A preliminary assessment of the impacts and vulnerability to projected climate change in key sectors such as water, agriculture, forestry, ecosystems, coastal zones, health, energy and infrastructure had been undertaken by the Government at the time of preparation of India's Initial National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) during 2001-04. The projected climate change scenarios indicate increase in, and variable trend of, both rainfall and temperature in the 21st century. It is projected that quantity of surface run off due to climate change would reduce and vary across the various river basins. The initial analysis has revealed that climate change may have adverse effects in terms of severity of droughts and intensity of floods in various parts of the country. Increase in CO2 concentration; increase in temperature and variable distribution of rainfall show a mixed projection of yields of various crops across the regions. No definite trends have yet been established. Forests types in India seem to be vulnerable to the projected changes in climate. Coastal areas are also vulnerable to climate variability in varying degrees.

(e) The Government of India is already seized of the various concerns that may arise due to climate change. The existing legislative and policy framework in various sectors of concern, together with programmes which target conservation of rivers, improvement of urban air quality, enhanced forestation, promotion of renewable energy technologies, energy efficiency etc. contribute to addressing climate change issues. Moreover, India has had, over the last 55 year of economic development, undertaken major programs addressing climate variability concerns. These include cyclone warning and protection, coastal protection, floods and drought control and relief, major and minor irrigation projects, control of malaria, food security measures and research on drought resistant crops.

A coordination committee chaired by Prime Minister called Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change has been recently constituted to coordinate national action for assessment, adaptation and mitigation of climate change. The focus of the Committee is to:

i. Evolve a coordinated response to issues relating to climate change at the national level;
ii. Provide oversight for formulation of action plans in the area of assessment, adaptation and mitigation of climate change;
iii. Periodically monitor key policy decisions.

The Government has also set up an "Expert Committee on Impacts of Climate Change". The Terms of Reference of the Committee are as under:

i. To study the impacts of anthropogenic climate change on India.
ii. To identify the measures that we may have to take in the future in relation to addressing vulnerability to anthropogenic climate change impacts.
iii. Any other matter relevant to
(i) and
(ii) above.

With regard to mitigation efforts, India has been actively participating in the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol. Today India also has the largest number of projects under CDM, which reduce net emissions of greenhouse gases. We are following a sustainable development path by a range of policies and programmes to mitigate climate change, some of which are:

i. ensuring energy conservation and improved energy efficiency in various sectors as well as setting up of Bureau of Energy Efficiency
ii. promoting use of renewable energy
iii. power sector reforms and active renewable energy programme
iv. use of cleaner and lesser carbon intensive fuel for transport
v. fuel switching to encourage cleaner energy
vi. afforestation and conservation of forests
vii. promotion of clean coal technologies
viii. reduction of gas flaring
ix. encouraging Mass Rapid Transport systems
x. environmental quality management for all sectors